



Stool Patterns

Bowel movement frequency in babies



Signs

- The first few days after birth most babies have one to several bowel movements each day.
- By the end of the second week the number of daily stools may decrease.
 - Stool patterns vary widely from one stool per feeding to one stool every few days.
 - Breastfed babies may have more frequent stools than bottle fed babies.



What to Know

Elimination Patterns of Babies

Baby Stool Patterns:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
Meconium	Thick, tarry, dark green	Birth-2 days
Normal	Loose, green-brown to yellow-brown, seedy	2-5 days
Breastfed	Mushy, golden yellow, often after each feeding, odor similar to sour milk	After 5 days
Formula-fed	Firm, pasty, yellow-brown, strong odor	After 5 days

- Babies may pass stools easily, or may fuss, grunt and turn red in the face while having a bowel movement. This is normal and is not constipation.
- Stools of a constipated baby are usually hard and difficult to pass.
 - The stools may change in color.
 - Breastfed babies generally have less constipation than formula fed babies.
- Diarrhea stools are more frequent and may be loose/watery.
 - Stools may be foul smelling or may contain mucus.
- Do not use home remedies for constipation or diarrhea.

Urination:

- Babies wet (urinate) three to four times per day in the first few days of life. By the end of the first week, the baby should wet six to 10 times per day if adequately hydrated.
- Urine is almost colorless.

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When to Call Your Health Care Provider

- If baby has a fever:
 - Axillary [armpit] 98.6° F (37.0° C) or higher
 - Rectally 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher
- If baby has fewer feedings than usual.
- If baby is vomiting.
- If baby has signs of dehydration:
 - Four or fewer wet diapers in 24 hours
 - Dry mouth
 - Sunken eyes
 - Sunken soft spot on head (fontanel)
 - Extreme irritability
 - Listlessness (decreased activity)
 - Possibly no tears
- If baby has two green, watery bowel movements in 24 hours that may be accompanied by vomiting.
- If baby has diarrhea or loose stools:
 - More than one per hour
 - Blood in stool
 - Signs of dehydration
- If baby has stools which are persistently hard and difficult to pass.

